

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 004219

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR INR/R/MR; IIP/RW; IIP/RNY; BBG/VOA; IIP/WEU; AF/PA;  
EUR/WE /P/SP; D/C (MCCOO); EUR/PA; INR/P; INR/EUC; PM; OSC ISA  
FOR ILN; NEA; WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC/WEUROPE; DOC FOR ITA/EUR/FR  
AND PASS USTR/PA; USINCEUR FOR PAO; NATO/PA; MOSCOW/PA;  
ROME/PA; USVIENNA FOR USDEL OSCE.

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - IRAN EU ISSUES: CHIRAC-BLAIR  
MEETING/EUROPE AS U.S. 'COUNTERWEIGHT'  
PARIS - WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

1. IRAN
2. EU ISSUES: CHIRAC-BLAIR MEETING/EUROPE AS U.S.  
'COUNTERWEIGHT'

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

COVERAGE TODAY IS OVERWHELMINGLY DEVOTED TO YESTERDAY'S  
MEETING BETWEEN CHIRAC AND BLAIR, TO THE RIFT BETWEEN THE TWO  
LEADERS OVER THE EUROPEAN BUDGET AND THE UK'S REQUEST FOR A  
REBATE. THE HEADLINE IN LA TRIBUNE, "THE CLASH BETWEEN CHIRAC  
AND BLAIR OVER THE EUROPEAN BUDGET" IS AN APT ILLUSTRATION OF  
THE REST OF TODAY'S MEDIA COVERAGE. THE EDITORIAL IN LE FIGARO  
CHARACTERIZES THE DISCUSSION AS "PETTY" ALTHOUGH IT AGREES  
WITH BLAIR THAT "A FUNDAMENTAL DEBATE ON THE EUROPEAN BUDGET  
IS NEEDED." (SEE PART C)

TONY BLAIR IS INTERVIEWED IN LE FIGARO ON THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL  
MODEL: "WE ARE VERY MUCH IN FAVOR OF A EUROPEAN SOCIAL MODEL.  
IN FACT WE HAVE OUR OWN. WE SPEND MORE MONEY TO FIGHT  
UNEMPLOYMENT THAN ANY OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRY. IT IS A  
MISUNDERSTANDING TO SPEAK OF AN 'ANGLO-SAXON LIBERAL MODEL.'  
WE ARE FOR A VERY STRONG SOCIAL DIMENSION. BUT THIS DIMENSION  
MUST CORRESPOND TO TODAY'S WORLD. CHINA AND INDIA REPRESENT  
MAJOR CHALLENGES, INCLUDING FOR THE U.S. THE TIME FOR INTRA-  
EUROPEAN COMPETITION HAS PASSED. THE QUESTION TODAY IS HOW ARE  
WE GOING TO DEAL WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD?"

AN ANALYSIS IN LE FIGARO ABOUT THE TWO DIFFERENT VISIONS OF  
THE WORLD, CHIRAC'S AND BLAIR'S, RECALLS THEIR DIFFERENCES  
OVER IRAQ AND HOW THEY SEE EUROPE. BLAIR IS QUOTED: "I DO NOT  
WANT TO SEE EUROPE BUILT AS A RIVAL OF THE U.S." (SEE PART C)

TODAY'S SECOND MAJOR STORY REVOLVES AROUND THE PRESS  
CONFERENCE GIVEN YESTERDAY BY FLORENCE AUBENAS, THE FORMER  
FRENCH HOSTAGE, THE "NAGGING QUESTION" OF THE ROLE PLAYED BY  
THE FRENCH PARLIAMENTARIAN JULIA IN HER LIBERATION, AND THE  
ISSUE AT STAKE FOR EDITORIAL BOARDS ABOUT SENDING JOURNALISTS  
TO IRAQ. IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION, AUBENAS'S EMPLOYER,  
ANTOINE DE GAUDEMAR WRITES IN HIS EDITORIAL: "WE AT LIBERATION  
DO NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF SENDING JOURNALISTS TO IRAQ.  
BUT THIS DECISION WILL BE TAKEN ONLY AFTER A CLOSE LOOK AT THE  
SECURITY CONDITIONS IN BAGHDAD. IT IS CLEAR THAT TO ABANDON  
IRAQ MEANS HANDING THE VICTORY TO ALL THOSE WHO WANT TO KEEP  
IRAQ ISOLATED FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD AND WHO ARE TAKING  
THAT COUNTRY HOSTAGE."

THE LATEST POLL CONDUCTED BY IFOP AND PARIS MATCH REVEALS THAT  
PRESIDENT CHIRAC'S POPULARITY HAS GONE DOWN BY 18 POINTS IN A  
MONTH, TO A 28 PERCENT APPROVAL RATING. IN REGIONAL L'EST  
REPUBLICAIN, EDITORIALIST PIERRE TARIBO COMMENTS: "YESTERDAY,  
PEOPLE SAID THAT IT WAS PM RAFFARIN THAT WAS BRINGING DOWN  
CHIRAC'S APPROVAL RATE. IF ONE IS TO GO BY THE LATEST  
POPULARITY RATING, IT IS CHIRAC HIMSELF WHO NO LONGER HAS THE  
APPROVAL OF THE PEOPLE. THE CITIZENS ARE WAVING DIVORCE PAPERS  
AND TURNING HIS BALANCE SHEET INTO FAILURE."

AN OP-ED IN LE FIGARO CALLS FOR AN INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO  
KEEP IRAN FROM ACHIEVING ITS NUCLEAR ASPIRATIONS. (SEE PART C)

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

IRAN

"SHOULD TEHRAN HAVE THE BOMB?"

GEORGES LE GUELTE FROM IRIS (INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AND  
STRATEGIC RELATIONS) IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (06/15):  
"THE NON PROLIFERATION TREATY HAS FOR THE MOST PART REACHED  
ITS OBJECTIVES, EVEN IF THE MAJOR POWERS HAVE NOT DONE THEIR  
BEST TO CONVINCE INDIA, ISRAEL AND PAKISTAN TO SIGN IT. TODAY,  
ALL THE OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE MADE THE COMMITMENT NOT TO SEEK  
WEAPONS, AND IT IS ESSENTIAL TO ENFORCE THIS ENGAGEMENT. THE  
OUTCOME OF THE NORTH KOREAN AND IRANIAN CRISES WILL BE  
DECISIVE: IF THESE TWO COUNTRIES ARE FORCED TO ABANDON THEIR  
MILITARY NUCLEAR AMBITIONS, IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT OTHER

CANDIDATES, TEMPTED BY THESE SAME AMBITIONS, WILL HESITATE TO INVEST IN A COSTLY ADVENTURE VOWED TO FAIL. IF ON THE OTHER HAND THEY ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS, OTHERS WILL SAY THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IS INCAPABLE OF IMPLEMENTING THE RULES IT HAS SET AND THAT THEY MUST ENSURE THEIR OWN SECURITY BY ANY MEANS POSSIBLE. A WORLD WITH TWENTY OR THIRTY NATIONS WITH A NUCLEAR ARSENAL CANNOT BE CONTROLLED. IF IRAN ACHIEVES ITS GOALS, IT WILL BE BECAUSE THE OTHER COUNTRIES COULD NOT OR DID NOT WANT TO STOP IT. THOSE POLITICIANS WHO WILL HAVE DONE NOTHING TO AVOID THIS SITUATION WILL BEAR A HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY."

EU ISSUES: CHIRAC-BLAIR MEETING/EUROPE AS U.S. `COUNTERWEIGHT'

"TWO VISIONS OF THE WORLD"

JACQUES DUPLOUICH IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (06/15):

"DURING THE CRISIS OVER IRAQ TONY BLAIR BELIEVED, UNTIL THE END, THAT HE WOULD BE ABLE TO `TURN' CHIRAC. LONDON BELIEVED THAT FRANCE'S POSITION WAS MERE `POSTURING.' THE FACT THAT CHIRAC, IN THIS EPISODE, WAS RIGHT BOTH ABOUT FORM AND CONTENT HAS NOT HELPED RELATIONS BETWEEN FRANCE AND BRITAIN. ESPECIALLY BECAUSE OTHER POINTS OF DISSENSION EXIST: WHEN CHIRAC TALKS ABOUT BUILDING A EUROPE-POWER TO DEAL WITH THE CHALLENGES OF A MULTIPOLAR WORLD, TONY BLAIR GOES TO BATTLE IMMEDIATELY: FOR HIM, EUROPE-POWER EQUATES AN ANTI-AMERICAN EUROPE. HIS COMMENT IS HARSH: `I DO NOT WANT A EUROPE BUILT TO RIVAL THE U.S.'"

"BLAIR AND THE `FAIR RETURN'"

NICOLAS BARRE IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (06/15): "LONDON IS STICKING TO THE NOTION OF `FAIR RETURN' ON THE MONEY POURED INTO THE EU BUDGET. THIS IS WHERE EUROPE IS TODAY, AND EVERYONE KNOWS WHAT BREAKDOWNS THESE PETTY QUARRELS CAN LEAD TO. THE IDEA OF A `JUST RETURN' IS NOT ECONOMICALLY SOUND. BUT THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER IS NOT WRONG WHEN HE CALLS FOR A FUNDAMENTAL DISCUSSION OF THE EUROPEAN BUDGET. THE LISBON AGENDA CALLED FOR `AN ECONOMY BASED ON THE MOST COMPETITIVE UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD BY 2010.' YET THE DISCUSSION OVER OUR BUDGET IS A MERE ACCOUNTING FIGHT OVER `THE NATIONAL BENEFITS' ALREADY ACQUIRED. SEEN FROM WASHINGTON AND BEIJING THIS FIGHT MUST SURELY LOOK OUT OF SYNC."

WOLFF